

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-13 ACDA-07 PM-04 H-01
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O R 171054Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0639
AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL IZMIR IMMEDIATE
INFO AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
USMISSION NATO
USCINCEUR
USNMR SHAPE
CINCNAVEUR
COMSIXTHFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 4597

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PINR, GR, TU
SUBJECT: GREEK SHORE OUTPOST FIRES ON TURKISH VESSEL OFF SAMOS

REF: ATHENS 3213 (DTG 090909Z APR 77)

1. A MINOR INCIDENT INVOLVING LIVE FIRE WHICH TOOK PLACE
OVER THE WEEKEND BETWEEN A GREEK OUTPOST ON THE AEGEAN
ISLAND OF SAMOS AND A TURKISH PATROL VESSEL WAS REVEALED
PUBLICLY LATE YESTERDAY (MAY 16). ACCORDING TO GOG SOURCES,
THE INCIDENT OCCURRED SATURDAY EVENING (MAY 14) WHEN A TURKISH
PATROL VESSEL APPROACHED A GREEK FISHING BOAT IN GREEK TERRI-
TORIAL WATERS (AN MFA OFFICIAL TOLD US THE BOAT WAS 200 METERS
FROM SHORE IN A SMALL COVE) AND ATTEMPTED TO SEIZE THE
FISHERMAN ABOARD. NOTING THE INTRUSION, GREEK SOLDIERS MANNING
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AN OUTPOST NEARBY ON THE ISLAND FIRED WARNING SHOTS AND THE
PATROL BOAT WITHDREW. HOWEVER, IT REPORTEDLY RETURNED ABOUT
HALF AN HOUR LATER AND AGAIN APPROACHED THE GREEK FISHING
BOAT. THIS TIME THE TURKISH CRAFT WAS GREETED WITH ADDITIONAL
ROUNDS WHICH DROVE IT OFF PERMANENTLY. (DAO WILL BE REPORTING
IN GREATER DETAIL BY SEPTTEL BASED ON INFORMATION FROM
GREEK MILITARY SOURCES.)

2. THE GOG IS OBVIOUSLY TRYING TO DOWNPLAY THE INCIDENT. THE SEMI-OFFICIAL ATHENS NEWS AGENCY BULLETIN MAY 17 QUOTED "CIRCLES CLOSE TO THE NATIONAL DEFENSE MINISTER" AS SAYING THAT THE TURKISH Bessel WAS THE SAME WHICH WAS INVOLVED IN A SIMILAR INCIDENT LAST MONTH (REFTEL) AND THAT ITS CAPTAIN WAS KNOWN TO BE A "HOT-HEAD." THUS, ADDED THE SOURCE, THE GOG "DOES NOT ATTACH PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE TO THE INCIDENT." THE ANA BULLETIN ACCOUNT ADDED THAT THE GREEKS HAD REACTED TO TEACH THE "HOT-HEADED" TURK THAT SUCH JOKES WOULD NOT BE TOLERATED, AND THAT A REPETITION WOULD LEAD TO SHOTS BEING FIRED DIRECTLY AT THE VESSEL.

3. COMMENT: AS WAS THE CASE LAST MONTH (REFTEL), THE FULL DETAILS OF THIS INCIDENT ARE NOT YET CLEAR. IT WOULD SEEM TO FOLLOW A PATTERN OF SIMILAR MINOR INCIDENTS OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS (NOT ALL INVOLVING LIVE FIRING, HOWEVER) BETWEEN GREEKS AND TURKS IN THE WATERS SEPARATING THE GREEK ISLANDS FROM THE TURKISH MAINLAND. WHILE NONE HAS LED TO MORE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES TO DATE, THERE IS ALWAYS A RISK THAT THINGS COULD GET OUT OF HAND LEADING TO A REAL CLASH. SO FAR, AT LEAST, THE GOG SEEMS TO BE HANDLING THIS MATTER CALMLY AND WITH RESTRAINT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE GOG WAITED A FEW DAYS BEFORE MAKING THE INCIDENT PUBLIC. THE MAF OFFICIAL WE CHECKED WITH (ACTING DIRECTOR OF GREEK-TURKISH AFFAIRS) SAID THE GOG WAS MAKING THE NECESSARY DEMARCHES TO THE GOT. HE DID NOT SEEM TO ATTACH TOO MUCH SIGNIFICANCE TO THE INCIDENT.

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 17-May-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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